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NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW

SEPTEMBER, 1917

THE PRESIDENT NOW FREE TO ACT MUST WIN THE WAR

BY THE EDITOR

WE report progress; not enough to exhilarate our allies or to dismay our enemies; and yet—progress. “Whereas,” naïvely declared the senior Senator from Montana, four months after war was declared, as the preamble of a resolution designating a day of prayer, “this country is about to engage in preparing for war,” be it resolved, etc. And so indeed it is, as with Siam and such other distant nations as have more recently proclaimed their adherence to the great cause. Whatever may be said or thought to the contrary, the fact is undeniable that we are beginning to get ready to commence to arrange to take steps to inaugurate a movement to proceed to make good our promise to enter upon the field of battle for the preservation of our own liberties and the safeguarding of democracy throughout the world. Whether the immortal Bard, in his vast imagining, conceived certain Senators, when he wrote—

When our actions do not,
Our fears do make us traitors, —
or our President, when he added —
I'll make assurance doubly sure,
And take a bond of fate, —
we have no means of knowing; nor would we, if we could,
attain the curse for moving precious bones . . . Let be!
We're getting on!

It has taken four months to clear the decks for what the

Secretary of the Navy would call action; but what of it? They are cleared now. Despite the haggling and hobbling of a Congress unwilling to invoke cloture to make effective the will of a majority, despite the hundred days of futile debate upon a single bill imposed by a few wilful men under sinister leadership of extraordinary skill, the true theory of undivided, masterful direction in war has finally prevailed, and the President holds in the hollow of his hands the full power which should have been his from the beginning,—a power infinitely greater than that of any other living ruler and unsurpassed by that of Alexander or of Napoleon.

We do not magnify it; we would not minimize it. That he himself realizes the magnitude of both his authority and his responsibility we may be assured. That he appreciates the demand of the logic of an unprecedented situation is proved by his insistence at a time when another of less resolution or daring would have been at best timorously acquiescent in the face of consequences so momentous to both his country and himself. Calmly, be it said to his highest credit, the President abides the mighty event, and patiently, considerately, yet vigilantly, a hundred millions of people await the outcome of the application of the sagacity of a single mind to the solving of problems existing and bound to arise, so many, so intricate and so vast as to seem well-nigh incomprehensible.

Five months of crippled endeavor have passed and all is well as could be asked in reason. But fourteen months of unimpeded guidance remain before the rendering of a verdict at the polls which—make no mistake—will be, not preliminary, but conclusive and final. So again, in all sincerity and in high hope, we cry, *Vite! vite!*

Unquestionably the President was right in demanding the concentration of authority which he has obtained and undoubtedly, we are confident, he now holds no less essential concentration of effort to be the immediate corollary. That there is altogether too much diversification at present is painfully apparent. The various civilian commissions, the various press agents, even the various cabinet officers, continue unmistakably to cross one another's paths in seeming ignorance and obvious jealousy of their respective prerogatives. The most notable case in point was, of course, the lamentable clash between General Goethals and Mr. Denman which re-

sulted in wholly unnecessary delay of months in the most pressing of needs, the construction of ships. We cannot see that blame for this very grave hindrance to both our allies and ourselves can be affixed justly upon anybody,—least of all upon the President, whose selection of General Goethals was acclaimed universally. The difficulty was inherent in the temperaments of two masterful, pig-headed men accustomed to have their own way. Its final resolution by the harassed President himself was apparently the best attainable and the country now looks to Mr. Hurley and Admiral Capps with full confidence in their amenability no less than in their capability. Nevertheless much mischief was done.

Hardly less menacing for the moment seemed the difference which arose over the price of coal between the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of War. The former supposed and had reason to suppose that he had effected a most satisfactory settlement and felicitated the country accordingly, only to be notified publicly and somewhat curtly, we must say, by the latter that he was empowered only to recommend and that his recommendation was not acceptable. But for the exceptional forbearance and wholehearted loyalty to his chief of Mr. Lane, this unhappy episode might easily have deranged an official relationship which should be, above all, at least harmonious. Fortunately no immediate harm ensued, but surely the calling of the attention of the country to a contrariety of opinion within the Cabinet upon so vital a subject could be productive of little good.

Of less importance but of hardly less significance was the prompt overruling by the Provost Marshal of the announced decision of the Secretary of the Navy that men enlisted for naval service were not subject to the draft. Needless to say, the deplorable confusion created in the minds of the thousands most directly concerned by these opposing decrees could and should have been averted through conference.

Other instances of lack of that team-play which none values more highly than the President himself might be adduced without close limitation; but let these suffice. The fundamental difficulty, as we perceive it, lies far less in the unwillingness of various officials to accord with definite policies than in the absence of the policies themselves. The controversy between General Goethals and Mr. Denman was not personal at the beginning. It arose from an honest difference of opinion respecting the relative merits of wooden

and steel ships,—a question, not of construction nor of management, but wholly of judgment. We think it quite probable that if, at the outset, a War Council of intelligent and open minds had given full consideration to the arguments of both sides and the President had rendered a decision based upon their recommendation, the outcome would have differed little from that which finally emerged from distasteful bickering; but, oh, the precious time that would have been saved!

So, too, with the happily temporary difference between the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of War. Here again was a question, not of authority, vested technically in Mr. Baker though actually in the President, nor of administration, but of policy. Was it wiser and more practicable for the Government to effect a suitable arrangement with producers and manufacturers with respect to prices or to fix prices arbitrarily? In view of the hearty and apparently unselfish response of those directly concerned to the President's moving appeal for general co-operation, we are disposed to think that he, in common with the country, would have considered negotiation well worth trying, and the first attempt by Mr. Lane certainly promised well; but the opportunity to make further tests was forfeited and the Government seems merely to have drifted into adoption of the arbitrary method, without due consideration of its relative merits or its positive hazards,—a conclusion which truly might have proved necessary in the end, but which many thoughtful persons feel should have been avoided if possible.

The point, respecting the bearing of enlistments upon the draft, at issue for a moment between the Secretary of the Navy and the Provost Marshal, being one of law and already abruptly determined by the Marshal, need not be considered. Nor need we concern ourselves at present with the bewildering antics of uncensorious publicity agents whose conception of their functions, sizzling at first in the frying-pan, seems now to be undergoing protracted formulation in the oven.

As we perceive the present situation, the urgent need is application of common sense, such as only the President apparently can supply, in the formulation of definite lines of military procedure. The Departments or advisers, whoever they may be, seem to be groping. Not long ago, for example, we were notified officially that no big guns would be sent abroad, first, because we had none to spare and, secondly,

because an adequate number could be obtained from the arsenals of France. Clearly, an announcement better calculated to cheer the enemy could hardly be imagined. Everybody knows that, in this war, infantry, deprived of the old-time cavalry screen, is helpless without the protection and blazing of the way by heavy artillery. Only the other day we read of a Canadian regiment going "over the top" at the wrong moment, because of the non-delivery of a rescinding order, and leaving dead upon the field six hundred out of eight hundred, mowed down with the utmost ease in open light of day by the machines of the enemy. It was but one of many like shocking experiences from which we should profit if we would avert the useless slaughter which too often has overwhelmed our brave neighbors from across the northern border.

That our field artillery is woefully destitute of big guns we were only too painfully aware, but there was and is in the coast artillery a large number of the so-called "obsolete" type, which are valueless for coast defense but wholly adapted to use in the field. Why they should not be utilized and why others should not be produced as rapidly as possible was inexplicable except upon the second theory that France could fill the need,—an assumption that seemed most doubtful and quickly proved to be wholly false. Now we are officially informed that the available big guns are to be sent and that a fresh supply has been ordered. It is gratifying information, to be sure; but, oh, again we cry, the time, the precious time that has been lost!

Another dereliction quite beyond our comprehension is attributable probably to our inordinate conceit. Nobody needed to be told, when we entered the war, that the German submarine was the chief menace of the Allies. England had striven with all her power and skill to solve the problem, but thus far in vain. How proudly, then, away back in April, we received the many flattering expressions of her fond anticipation that "American inventive genius" would find the way! How grandly we called upon our venerable wizard and his satellites and how complacently we heralded our foresight in having already brought their skill into play! How eagerly and gleefully we seized upon the brilliant suggestion of some imaginative wayfarer and ordered the construction overnight of a myriad of wonderful "chasers"!

But, alas, if not a dream, it was a mirage. Four months

later it was discovered that the building of "chasers" was impracticable; quite likely the small craft would prove ineffective in any case; so the project was abandoned. After all, upon second or third or fourth thought, perhaps it would be well to place dependence for a time, while our inventive genius was still hatching, upon destroyers.

And here comes the bitterness of the tale. When the Secretary of the Navy presented his famous Fourth-of-July gift to the country and received the cordial thanks of the Secretary of War for conveying the first detachment of troops safely to France, the people gladly responded to the call for recognition of the efficiency of the navy. But one vital fact seems to have been overlooked, namely, that the safe arrival of our troopships was attributable wholly to the vigilance of the accompanying destroyers. The achievement was noteworthy, to be sure, and gratifying, of course; but relatively it was hardly remarkable. England had transported nearly five hundred thousand troops from Canada alone without the loss of a single life, and how many she had borne safely from the other colonies and across the channel could only be imagined. Indeed, so far as we have been apprised, not one troopship nor one merchantman properly convoyed had or has been sunk since the beginning of the war.

The immediate and overwhelming value of destroyers, both in safeguarding the lives of our own soldiers and in ridding the seas of the pirate craft, was apparent to the veriest tyro. Unlimited sums of money had been voted by Congress for such construction as might be regarded as most advantageous by those in authority. That the usual secrecy was requisite nobody questioned, but we venture to assert that everybody who gave the subject the most casual consideration took for granted that scores, probably hundreds, of standardized destroyers, the only type that had actually demonstrated efficiency, were in process of the speediest manufacture.

For ourselves, at any rate, we have to confess, it was with a sense of sheer dismay that we read coincidentally with the announcement of the abandonment of "chaser" building, that the entire fleet consisted of but forty-nine destroyers, not all in commission presumably, that only "seven or eight" additional will be available during the next six months, and that hardly twenty more will be ready during 1918. A larger number, we are happy to say, are promised for 1919; but, oh,

again, the time, the precious time that has been lost in providing, as might have been provided so easily, protection for our American boys in transit to the battlefields!

We would not be understood as deprecating endeavor to solve the submarine problem by scientific process or through inventive revelation; on the contrary, efforts along those lines should be doubled and redoubled, upon the theory that no poison lacks an antidote. What we do maintain is that simultaneously every obvious and practical offset, however inadequate as a remedy, should be utilized in conformity with the dictates of common sense. And this involves the whole question of naval policy on the part of both ourselves and our allies. England demonstrated her tardy realization of this fact when finally she placed the civilian, Sir Eric Geddes, at the head of the Admiralty, but our own Government continues to drift and grope. We can hardly credit the phrase, "That cannot be determined until we know whether we are going to fight an offensive or a defensive war," attributed by Mr. Roosevelt to the Secretary of the Navy; but the fact is all too plain that so far we have been content merely to trail along, without assuming or even asking to participate in the conferences now taking place in London under the direction of the new First Lord.

It is with peculiar satisfaction and no little relief, therefore, not only as evidence of firmer determination but indicative of the President's intention to take the subject matter within his own strong grasp, that we hear from Washington a proposal to send a special commission to London to study at first hand in co-operation the actual situation.

"This commission," writes Mr. C. W. Gilbert in the *Tribune*, "may either devise a policy for attacking the German submarine or the German navy—in which case vigorous support will be required from the Administration, such as will give to this country the leadership in forming a naval policy for the Allies; or it may report that the present policy of the Allies represents all that is possible in the way of naval effort; or it may report, what all the best naval critics are saying, that more aggressive strategy is called for, though it may fail to suggest such strategy. In any case, if the commission is wisely chosen the best brains in American civil and naval life will have been put into contact with the U-boat problem, and the nation will know what may be expected."

Readers of this REVIEW need not be told how earnestly we concur with this intelligent observer when he continues:

What is needed on the commission is men who can see America's great part and great responsibility as they really are; men who will go over, not with the idea that we are the younger brother, to do whatever the older brother says, but men who will see that in the end it is America that will have to win the war, and who accordingly will preserve their independent point of view. What is needed more than anything else is a different point of view and a different vision of responsibility. This country is going to be the dominant partner in this war before a year and a half passes, by reason of its possession in the largest measures of those things that up till now have made England the dominant partner—above all, economic power, which means capacity to build ships of war and merchant ships.

Day by day the truth of our declaration, made away back in May, that it is "up to America" to *win the war* and that consequently we must take the lead in formulating policies, as well as meet demands for money, munitions and men, is becoming more apparent. Grateful as we are and should be to our allies for their magnificent service in the great cause, the grim fact cannot be ignored that they are war-worn and weary while we are alert, vigorous and soon, we hope and pray, shall become fighting mad. The President himself has done well to "make assurance doubly sure" by moving cautiously along the "precise and scientific" lines which he delimited at the beginning, but of all men living he would be the last to encourage the fools who would "fight Germany only on American soil" by trying to differentiate between "offensive" and "defensive" warfare.

We would not be so presumptuous as—well, as Mr. Gilbert,—in suggesting even Colonel House as the most desirable head of such a commission; nor is there reason to suspect that the distinguished publicist need concern himself unduly in this regard. The appointments of civilians to important posts, beginning with that of Mr. Root and including such men as Mr. Hoover, Mr. Vail and Mr. Davison, all made without heed to political predilections, have been admirable without exception. The selection of General Pershing, too, is conceded even by Our Colonel to have been the best conceivable, with possibly one exception.

Of the wisdom of heeding the ancient rule of seniority in designating general officers there is less certainty. Some time ago announcement was made, and subsequently rather half-heartedly denied, that General Pershing had requested

that no general officers of more than forty-five years of age be sent to France because inquiry and observation had convinced him that older men could not meet the physical requirements successfully. His recommendation applied only to officers to be put in charge of actual operations and did not affect those to be attached to headquarters, but the General Staff adhered to the old rule of seniority and the President, reversing his previous observance of the selective or merit system, sustained his official advisers. The consequence is that the new brigadiers comprise in a large measure elderly colonels, practically none of whom has commanded a brigade or even a regiment in the field, many of whom are approaching the age of retirement, few of whom regard with favor the changes in organization proposed by General Pershing to meet the novel requirements abroad and practically all of whom are wedded by training and tradition to ancient methods long since abandoned by the Allied commanders.

Upon its face the President's reversal of his original policy, as indicated by his appointments in June, seems ill-judged, but it is admitted that the officers designated are generally capable, even though somewhat unelastic if not hidebound, are nearly all graduates of the Military Academy and in all fairness, after lifetimes of faithful service, are entitled to promotion. Moreover, despite the constant "scrapping" of older officers in the Allied armies, a large majority of those holding highest commands are in the sixties. The average age of the French generals is 60.5 and only one, Gourad, is under 50. The others include General Joffre, 64; Foch, 65; de Castelnau, 65; Dubail, 65; de Maud'huy, 60; Langle de Cary, 67; Villaret, 64; and Roques, 60. In the German Army the average age is higher still; it is 63.5, though a list of twenty-one names includes that of the Crown Prince, who is only thirty-four. Field Marshal von Hindenburg is 69, and Field Marshal von Mackensen, 71. British generals in the field are younger. A list of twenty names proves the average age to be 53.9. General Sir Douglas Haig is 55, General Sir H. Plumer, 59; General Sir C. Monro, 56; and General Birdwood, 51, like Lord Cavan and Sir C. Ferguson. The youngest commander, General Gough, is 46—the age of Wellington and Napoleon at Waterloo.

Nevertheless the familiar adage respecting old men for counsel and young men for war abundantly justified itself

in our own Civil War and we may assume safely that the President is fully awake to the necessities of the fighting line. The work in the training camps will afford ample opportunity for weeding out and it is most unlikely that any general officers who betray mental or physical laxity will see actual service in Europe. Meanwhile the promotions open the way for quick advancement of the younger graduates of West Point, who are recognized universally as the most alert, competent and up-to-date in the world. Notwithstanding the seeming unwisdom of rigid adherence to the seniority system, therefore, it would appear that the farsightedness which has characterized nearly all of the President's acts since the beginning of the war did not fail him in this instance.

We can understand, too, why he should have felt impelled to confer absurdly disproportionate and incongruous military titles upon the officers of the Red Cross. It would be interesting to know what fertile imagination hatched this brilliant suggestion, but once proffered to him as a way of showing his appreciation of the enormous sums raised for carrying on the greatest humanitarian work ever undertaken, the suggestion was one which the President doubtless felt he could not reject without ungraciousness.

What our militant Colonel thinks of the performance which put the coveted two stars upon the shoulders of his unloved successor while he, alas, must rest content with the hardly won eagle has not yet been betrayed in public, but it is worthy of note that on the very day when the announcement appeared the stomach of Mr. Taft rebelled so poignantly that he had to send for a doctor. To add insult to injury, the *World* mischievously printed a portrait of the former President in the uniform of a Major General, but mercifully spared Mr. Davison, whose personal modesty is surpassed only by his executive ability. Surely neither of these plain Americans sought a distinction comparable only to that self-bestowed by the late General William Booth. Nor can we believe that Brigadier General Cornelius N. Bliss deliberately grasped the opportunity to take his place in rank by the side of the distinguished Tasker H. It may be, of course, that the happy thought cracked its shell at a caucus of the nobby young Colonels of Wall Street, but if so we hardly think one of them would admit it.

Happily the report that the titles of Admiral, Rear Ad-

miral and Captain are to be conferred upon the officers of the W. C. T. U., who also are rendering valiant service, is officially denied. So we may conclude with a sigh of relief that the present outcome signifies the end of a quite ominous beginning. Otherwise the imagination would run riot in depicting Senior Major General Taft starting forth from Paris astride a tank followed by his gallant staff with flashing swords and cohorts of captains laden with lint for a desperate assault upon the helpless blessés.

But we refrain in the hope that this signal example may suffice to minimize the promiscuous scattering of military degrees, to the obvious and serious detriment of the service. One of the greatest of the many difficulties which now confront the President is that of resolving the various segments of the great National Army, comprising regulars, volunteers, conscripts and all species of "reserves" into one harmonious and efficient working body. For years our professional soldiers, unlike those of any other nation, have received scant consideration from the people except in the event of a dangerous strike which the militia could not be relied upon to quell. Even now, at the inception of a mighty conflict in which they must play the leading part, public attention is centred upon the patriotic but amateurish newcomers.

That under such circumstances the highly trained men who have given their life work to their country should become somewhat callous and regard themselves as a class without the pale of fair recognition goes without saying, but words of complaint such as were voiced, in a recent number of the *Army and Navy Journal*, by an officer whose indignation at his treatment in New York passed the bounds of human restraint, are the rarest imaginable. It should be, then, a matter of deep gratification to all good citizens that these most capable and most hardworking soldiers feel that they have in the President not only a chief commander who cannot be swerved by political or personal considerations but also a friend, conscious of the country's and his own obligation to render just rewards. The gentlemen of the Red Cross and like societies are entitled to the highest credit for their superb service in the cause of humanity and we would not begrudge them empty titular baubles as tokens of the Nation's gratitude, but let us not forget that only lives can *win the war* and that those who give or risk them are not proper subjects of unfair or even inferential discrimination.

As we write, the President is preparing an answer to the Pope. Quite likely, before these words shall appear in print, the reply will have been published. It will be courteous in phrase, and sympathetic in spirit, of course, but to doubt for a moment that it will convey in plainest terms an emphatic refusal to entertain so childish a proposal would be to question the President's integrity. We await his response with absorbing interest but without the slightest trepidation. In simple fact, he need only point to his own great declaration of April 2nd, when he announced to the world that "our object is to vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the life of the world as against selfish and autocratic power"; when he told us that "no autocratic Government could be trusted to keep faith" within a league of nations, that "in such a Government" as Germany's, "following such methods, we can never have a friend; and that in the presence of its organized power, always lying in wait to accomplish we know not what purpose, there can be no assured security for the democratic Governments of the world"; when he accepted the gage of battle, to fight "for the rights of nations great and small and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and of obedience"; and when he declared irrevocably that "we shall be satisfied when those rights have been made as secure as the faith and the freedom of the nation can make them",—and not till then.

Clearly foreseeing just such an attempt as that of the Pope to intervene in response, conscious or unconscious, to the beguiling of Austria and the manœuvring of Germany, he added these ringing words which cannot be reiterated too frequently:

" 'Peace, peace, peace' has been the talk of Germany's Foreign Office for a year or more, not peace upon her own initiative, but upon the initiative of the nations over which she now deems herself to hold the advantage. A little of the talk has been public, but most of it has been private, through all sorts of channels. It has come to me in all sorts of guises, but never with the terms disclosed which the German Government would be willing to accept . . . The military masters under whom Germany is bleeding see very clearly to what point Fate has brought them; if they fall back or are forced back an inch, their power abroad and at home will fall to pieces. . . . Deep fear has entered their hearts. They have but one chance to perpetuate their military power, or even their controlling political influence. If they can secure peace now, with the immense advantage still in their hands, they will have justified themselves before the German people. They will have gained by force what they promised to gain by it—an immense expansion of German power

and an immense enlargement of German industrial and commercial opportunities. Their prestige will be secure, and with their prestige their political power. If they fail, their people will thrust them aside. A Government accountable to the people themselves will be set up in Germany. . . . Do you not now understand the new intrigue for peace, and why the masters of Germany do not hesitate to use any agency that promises to effect their purpose, the deceit of nations? Their present particular aim is to deceive all those who, throughout the world, stand for the rights of peoples and the self-government of nations, for they see what immense strength the forces of justice and liberalism are gathering out of this war. They are employing Liberals in their enterprises. Let them once succeed, and these men, now their tools, will be ground to powder beneath the weight of the great military Empire."

We willingly pay the benignant and griefstricken Benedictus the doubtful honor of being a dupe; but when, in the face of the awful revelations made to him in person by the great Cardinal of Belgium, he asserts that "everybody acknowledges that on both sides the honor of arms is safe," we shudder at what can only be regarded as his wilful obsession. Granting, moreover, the sincerity of his opinion, shared by few others, that the great conflict must end as a drawn battle, how can we reconcile to any conceivable conception of morals and righteousness an ignoble compromise between right and wrong, between good and evil, between civilization and barbarism, between human freedom and human slavery?

The Holy Father should study the holy laws:

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Thou shalt not kill (wantonly).

Thou shalt not commit adultery (or rape).

Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not bear false witness.

Thou shalt not covet.

"The Ten Commandments," said James Russell Lowell, "will not budge." Each and every one of those enumerated Germany has violated openly, brazenly, defiantly, shamelessly—and she must pay the penalty in full.

We hope the President may feel impelled to say in diplomatic language but in unmistakable terms:

"When Germany shall have withdrawn within her borders every soldier whose feet now stand upon foreign soil; when she shall have returned to France, to Belgium, to Serbia, to Roumania, to Poland and to Russia all of the helpless men and ravished women whom she has wrested ruthlessly from their homes; when she shall have abandoned wholly her illegal and inhuman warfare at sea; when she shall

have ceased to bombard unprotected villages and to kill little children from the air; when she shall have driven from power the group of monsters who forced this frightful calamity upon an unoffending world,—then, and not till then, will America consent to consider her appeal for peace.”

But all with this explicit understanding, as set forth by General U. S. Grant to General S. B. Buckner at Fort Donelson in 1862:

“No terms except unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted . . . I propose to move immediately upon your works.”

Away with Peace, peace when there is no peace! On with the fight for God and man! “The responsibility,” truly says the President, “rests upon the Administration,”—and now when at last, he holds the power, full and undivided, again we cry, *Vite, vite!* To make the world safe for democracy? Yes, a thousand times, yes! But first, and no less to that glorious end, let us—

Make America secure for liberty!

DEGENERATE GERMANY

THE cup is filled. It is the cup of German mendacity; more deep, more dark, more virulent, than any ever filled before by any nation in all the erring annals of mankind. Appropriately, too, it is the Kaiser of *Kultur* who himself adds the final drops.

It is not pleasant to brand an Emperor as a liar; but then it is not pleasant to see one thus convicted out of his own mouth and the mouths of his retainers. Mr. Gerard made public the other day the text of a personal letter or statement, addressed by the German Emperor to the President of the United States. In that document the Emperor declared, directly and unequivocally, that he invaded Belgium and violated the neutrality treaty because of knowledge or at least news that France was preparing to invade Germany through Belgium. That same impudent falsehood had been put forward many times before, by others; but here it was directly and unqualifiedly fathered by the Emperor himself. In one draft of the letter he said that he had “knowledge,” and in a later draft, that he had “news,” of France’s impending invasion of Germany by way of Belgium. It does not matter which word is used. We cannot assume an Emperor to act

in so grave a matter upon news which he does not know to be true.

Mark the sequel. The Chief of the Supplementary General Staff of the German Army, a person whose imposing name and titles we may abbreviate to Lieutenant-General Baron von Freytag-Loringhoven, now declares that Germany had no such knowledge of French intentions, and that such was not the reason for Germany's invasion of Belgium. France, he admits, had no thought of invading Germany through Belgium. She did not mass her troops on the Belgian frontier, but on that of Alsace-Lorraine for a direct invasion of Germany. And it was thus not because France was preparing to invade through Belgium, but, on the exact contrary, because she was *not* preparing to do so, that Germany committed her rape of that neutral country. It was not in self-defence, to block a blow from France in that quarter, that Germany overran Belgium; but it was a bit of sharp practice, to take France by surprise, by attacking her in a quarter in which, vainly trusting to the sanctity of treaties, she had made no preparation even for defence.

Now to put the matter bluntly,—and of course soldiers, like the Kaiser and the Lieutenant-General Baron, et cetera, always prefer blunt, direct speech,—either the Emperor or his Chief of Supplementary General Staff has lied. And it is not alone on the ground of precedence and deference to his superior rank that we must let our first choice fall upon the Kaiser. The known facts of the case unerringly and inevitably point to the Lieutenant-General Baron's story as the true one.

This, we say, is the last drop in the cup of German mendacity. But it is the last of many. There was the lie about German mobilization which the German Government caused to be printed in a Berlin newspaper, in a special edition designed only for the eyes of the Russian Ambassador; so that he might send the news to his Government, that that Government might itself order mobilization to meet that of Germany, and that Germany might thus have Russia's mobilization as a pretext for her own. There was the lie formally embodied in the German declaration of war against France, that France had already begun war by making aerial invasions and bombardments of German territory—a statement which was subsequently confessed, by high German officials, to have been entirely without foundation. There was the lie

about guns having been mounted or at least carried on the *Lusitania*, admitted to be a lie by the wretched agent of the German Government who, under orders from Berlin, originally uttered it. There was the lie to the effect that Germany was not privy, in advance, to the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia, which has been pilloried as a lie by high officials of Germany and of Austria-Hungary.

We need not further analyze the noisome contents of the cup. These few drops are sufficient to indicate the vileness of the whole. Nor need we, on reflection, wonder at it; nor particularly wonder at the personal mendacity of the Emperor himself. As master, so disciple; and at least two of the three men whose examples and precepts have most moulded the character and directed the course of William II were distinguished for their cynical disregard for truth.

One of these was Bismarck, who boasted of the fact that he had falsified an important dispatch, and thus had tricked France into beginning the War of 1870; which France would not have begun if she had not thus been deceived by him. That was a trick which William II closely copied in 1914 by issuing that spurious edition of an officially inspired newspaper, luring or provoking Russia into a step toward war which she would never have taken but for that lie.

The other was Frederick the Great, whose memory and example have been all but apotheosized by the present Kaiser. Apart from the well known examples of that great soldier's duplicity and falsehood, it is of peculiar interest to recall some passages from his *Instructions in the Art of Reigning*, addressed by him to his nephew, Frederick William II. In that work he said:

Religion is absolutely necessary in a State, but it would not be very wise in a King to have any religion himself. Should it be necessary to make a treaty with other Powers, if we remember that we are Christians, we are undone; all would be over with us. As to war, it is a trade in which the least scruple would spoil everything.

Do not suffer yourself to be dazzled with the word Justice; it is a word that has different relations, and is susceptible of different constructions.

I understand by this word [politics] that we are ever to try to cheat others. This principle being established, never be ashamed of making alliances, and of being yourself the only party that draws advantages from them. Do not commit that stupid fault of not abandoning them whenever it is your interest to do so.

Have you a mind to pass for a hero? Make boldly your approaches to crimes.

It is good policy to be perfectly persuaded that we have a right to everything that suits us.

When Prussia shall have made her fortune, it will be time enough for her to give herself an air of fidelity to engagements; an air which, at the most, becomes none but great States or little sovereigns.

How faithfully and effectively the present Emperor has followed these precepts of "Old Fritz" the world knows only too well. Nor is he alone in assimilation of the moral poison. Nor is the evil confined to the Junkers and to the Prussian military caste. It has spread through the nation. The utterances of German papers, publicists, professors, and preachers, since the beginning of the war, have been deeply tinged with it. It is not alone the Kaiser who has incurred the characterization which William Watson has given him in one of his late poems, prospective of the Kaiser's entrance into the Plutonian Shades:

Father of Lies, receive thy Son!

Lamentable as it may seem, the German nation itself is in the pillory; and that is indeed the deplorable, the heart-rending feature of the case: that Germany stands before the world to-day, and is doomed to stand for many years to come, as a degenerate nation. Through the teaching begun by Frederick the Great and sedulously continued by a succession of leaders since his time, Germany has become a moral pervert.

This is the more lamentable because we are about to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of Martin Luther, who gave to the world perhaps its greatest impulse toward liberty that it had had in a thousand years. It is the more lamentable, when we recall what German Culture was before it became *Kultur*. Lessing, the prophet of the universal brotherhood of man; Schiller, almost the peer of Byron as the poet of freedom; Richter, Goethe—these and others were what Germany meant to the world, before the days of Bernhardi and Tirpitz.

Germany has become a moral bankrupt: mendacious, lawless, immoral, inhuman. And this latest revelation shows that the bankruptcy extends from the humblest Boche in the trenches up to the occupant of the imperial—or imperious—throne. Like sovereign, like subject. That is the sad feature of the case, but it is also one of the most practically important for the rest of the world to bear in mind. We must remember that we are dealing with an enemy that is as mendacious as it is militant; an enemy that is not to be believed

under oath; an enemy whose proposals for peace and whose promises of terms of peace must spontaneously be assumed to be deceptive and treacherous until they are proved to be sincere.

It is a dreadful thing to have this true of one of the most populous nations of the world, and of one to which the world owes so much of the arts of material civilization. But it is true, and it is essential for the security of the world that it should so be recognized, and that, accordingly, this appalling fact should be made one of the chief bases of our procedure. We cannot safely listen to her and negotiate with her as we could listen to and negotiate with other nations. We must regard her as a degenerate, as an exception to the law, as a perverted criminal to whom we must apply special treatment, even as penologists do to degenerate and perverted individuals. It is an appalling spectacle, for the twentieth century of the Christian Era; but it is after all only the logical fruition of generations of *Kultur* directed at nothing but material gain and quite ignoring and despising the things which are spiritual and eternal. Never was there an utterance more characteristic of *Kultur* than that of the greatest of all contemporary German philosophers, Haeckel, when he said of a certain theory that, though he could not prove it to be true and there was no sure indication that it was true, yet "it must be true; for otherwise we should have to admit the existence of God."

One of these days degenerate Germany will indeed have to admit the existence of God.

DID WE MEAN IT?

HAS this Nation—has this Government—meant what it has said about the war during these last three years? We refer to what has been said seriously, thoughtfully, officially, on matters of the greatest importance. Did we mean those things? Or were we all the time, as Mr. Bryan said we were on one supreme occasion, merely talking for buncombe? Let us recall a few of the things that have been said, and consider whether we really meant them then; and mean them now.

There was at the very beginning of the war a general and emphatic expression of opinion that a great wrong had been done in ignoring the provisions of the Treaty of The Hague and in entering upon war just as though no such

convention had ever been formed. There was immeasurably strong condemnation of the treatment of the Belgian neutrality treaty as a mere "scrap of paper." The wanton destruction of Louvain and other places aroused our passionate reprobation. The deportation of Belgian civilians into alien slavery, and the other atrocious crimes against non-combatants, greatly moved the American people and caused our Government officially to protest against them.

The *Lusitania* massacre elicited from press and public, and from official circles, strong protests and denunciations. In relation to that and other like crimes the President himself used some of the strongest language of his official career. He spoke of "strict accountability;" and he declared that the German submarine campaign was "utterly incompatible with the principles of humanity, the long-established and incontrovertible rights of neutrals, and the sacred immunities of non-combatants."

Five months ago the President, speaking very thoughtfully and deliberately, said—and in so saying he was sustained by Congress and by the nation with a unanimity and emphasis seldom witnessed in our history—that Germany had thrown to the winds all scruples of humanity and of respect for the understandings that were supposed to underlie the intercourse of the world; that Germany was waging a warfare against all nations, against mankind; that the most sacred rights of this nation had been ignored and violated; that we were arrayed against wrongs which cut to the very roots of human life; and that we were accepting the gage of battle with a natural foe to liberty, and should if necessary spend the whole force of the nation to check and nullify its pretensions and its power.

These are some of the things which we said.

Did we mean them?

Were they true?

It should seem not only superfluous but offensively impertinent to ask these questions. It would be a monstrous, an intolerable, aspersion upon us to suggest that we said or could have said such things without meaning them, or without the most complete and convincing assurance of their truth. Yet there is nothing less than just such a suggestion, or something if possible still worse, in the pattering demands that are being made by German agents and their American dupes for a statement of our purposes in the war and of our

terms of peace. For in the utterances to which we have referred those purposes and those terms have already been indicated as distinctly and as unequivocally as any rational person could wish them to be. The only object of the present demand must be, therefore, to secure a modification of them. It would be silly to ask for a mere restatement of what has been so often, so clearly, and so definitely stated.

But what would be implied in a modification of our purposes and terms? One of three things; to wit:

First, that we were wrong in our former statements; that we did not mean them, or that they were not true. We have already characterized that as a monstrous and intolerable aspersion, in which characterization we are confident that we have the support of the American nation.

Second, that we now condone the crimes which we then condemned. We do not believe that the American nation will agree to that. We do not believe that opinion concerning the "scrap of paper," the deportation and enslavement of the Belgians, and the *Lusitania* massacre, has reversed itself, or undergone any material change. If three years ago we regarded the rape of Belgium as a violation of treaty-pledged faith, and of the principles of humanity, so do we regard it to-day. If we looked upon the *Lusitania* affair as murder, we so look upon it to-day. If a year or two ago we considered the U-boat campaign as "utterly incompatible with the principles of humanity," we so consider it to-day; and we note that it is being conducted to-day with even greater disregard for humanity than when the President thus condemned it. It would be an intolerable insult to the nation, to suggest that we now condone the crimes which hitherto we have condemned.

There remains a third suggestion. That is, a *non possumus*. That is, that we have come to the conclusion that we are not able to do anything about it. That is, that while we meant all that we said, and while it was all true, and while we still regard with that same abhorrence the crimes of Germany, yet we are really not able to compel cessation of those practices, we are unable to exact the strict accountability of which we once so bravely spoke, we are not strong enough to punish the guilty or to secure guarantees for the future, and we must be content to call the game of war a draw, and make peace on the general ground of doing nothing about the past, and of letting everything go on just as it was before.

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Now we repeat that this third suggestion, which is obviously what our Hun-led pacifists are seeking to have realized, is if possible the most offensive of the three. It would be bad enough to say that we had been in error or had been "bluffing," or that we had changed our minds. But to say that we were right and in earnest, and have not changed our minds, but have decided to plead the baby act, would be simply unspeakable in its vileness.

Now, when at last we are beginning to wake up and to employ our strength; now, when our enemy and the enemy of humanity is palpably weakening; now, when more than ever before there is a prospect of vindicating the right and punishing the wrong and making the world safe for democracy, now to falter and trim and recede would be an act of treason to America and to humanity so monstrous as to make the sum of all preceding treason throughout the ages seem petty and inconsiderable. Now is the time to stand by every righteous word that we have spoken. Now is the time to enforce every principle of right that we have proclaimed. Now is the time to exact every item of indemnity which we have claimed. Now is the time to insist upon no compromise, no recession, no conceivable terms but UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER.

"Now strike! and end the creature! to the hilt!"

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MR. HOOVER

THERE is need of Mr. Hoover. Simultaneously with his assumption of the duties and powers of a National Food Administrator came one of the most convincing indications of the necessity of just such work as he is to do. To which we may joyously add that his first announcement of plans and purposes, made with gratifying promptness, displayed a singularly complete comprehension of the needs of the situation, and an admirable resolution to meet those needs in a thoroughgoing manner.

The indications of the need of food administration, or control, were given in Dun's Index Numbers of wholesale prices for August 1, and in comparison with the corresponding numbers for just a year before. These showed that the Index Number of the price of breadstuffs—meaning, of course, chiefly wheat—had risen from \$28.660 on August 1, 1916, to \$64.071 on August 1, 1917: an increase of 123 per cent.

No other important class of commodities showed anything like such an increase. Meats of all kinds rose only twenty-nine per cent. Dairy and garden products showed an increase of twenty-two per cent. All other food products were content with a rise of twenty-six per cent. Clothing rose forty-two per cent; metals, for which there is a vastly increased demand because of the war, fifty-four per cent; and all other commodities, twenty-two per cent. The total increase of all these classes, including foodstuffs, was fifty-two per cent.

What did it mean, that the price of breadstuffs increased considerably more than twice as much as that of anything else, and much more than twice as much as the prices of all things put together? It would require a greater degree of credulity than even our exuberant kindliness and faith in human nature could summon, to believe that such an increase was entirely legitimate and due solely to the natural operations of the law of demand and supply. It is true that there has been no such enormous expansion of wheat acreage, as there has been of garden area. The latter achievement has been one of the most noteworthy and most gratifying of the year.

Last spring, at garden-planting time, we urged in these pages the mobilization of food-producing forces, and the increase of production, partly through intensified culture, to increase the yield per acre, and partly through the increase of acreage by the cultivation of neglected fields and even small plots in suburban and urban areas. How well this policy was adopted and executed is seen in the report of the National Emergency Food Garden Commission, that the gardens of the country were this year more than trebled in area. Thus in "worn-out" New Hampshire there was an increase in garden area of 400 per cent, and in the whole of New England, with its notorious array of "neglected and abandoned farms" and its "barren hill lands," the increase was 275 per cent. Beyond question, this achievement has much to do with the fact that the increase in price of garden products in the year was only twenty-two per cent, or less than one-fifth that of breadstuffs.

But even the lack of any such expansion of wheat-growing area and consequent increase of production is quite insufficient to account for so enormous a rise in price. We must therefore attribute the 123 per cent increase largely to

artificial causes. Wheat is of all important food products the most easily stored and hoarded. It does not require canning nor cold storage. The farmer can keep it in bins in his barn, the elevator-man or the miller can keep it in his warehouse. The speculator can hold it back from the market indefinitely, until an artificial scarcity is produced and prices are artificially forced up.

That this very thing has been done is notorious. Western farmers are known to have been preparing vast storage bins, with the frankly avowed purpose of holding back their wheat from market until they had forced it up to \$2.50 or more a bushel. Obviously, garden and dairy products cannot thus be manipulated so easily, if at all. They must be sold at once, at whatever price the market affords. That is one chief reason why there is so great a contrast in the respective increase of prices of the two classes of commodities.

Mr. Hoover evidently understands the case. That is why at the very beginning of his administration he announced stringent ways and means for preventing such manipulation of breadstuffs. He will prohibit the storing of wheat for more than thirty days without special permission, and he will require every elevator or mill of over a hundred barrels daily capacity to be licensed. Speculation in "wheat futures" is to be stopped, prices are to be regulated, and the Government will establish agencies for buying up the whole crop, to resell it in suitable quantities and at proper prices. As for any who may "hold up" wheat or flour contracts, they will be unsparingly prosecuted.

This is all highly significant. It means, we should say, a radical reform in the wheat trade, in the interest of the consumers and not against the legitimate interests of the producers: against nobody, indeed, save the sordid speculators who would enrich themselves by gambling in the necessities of life. If Mr. Hoover is permitted to carry out his plans, we shall expect to see a considerable reduction in the price of wheat and of bread, as there ought to be. We are informed upon good authority that in war-beleaguered England, dependent for food upon the outside world, the cost of foods of all sorts is now just about double what it was before the war. If that is so, certainly the cost of breadstuffs should not be *more* than doubled here in a single year of the war, after a very considerable increase during the two preceding years.

We are told that there is vehement opposition to the

system of control which Mr. Hoover is establishing. At that we are not surprised, but the fact does not lessen our approval of his system. "You would have it so, George Dandin!" The young men of this country had an opportunity, on most favorable terms, to enlist voluntarily in the nation's military service. They would not do it, and therefore conscription was adopted. The nation must be defended. So, too, the wheat growers and dealers have had an opportunity, long drawn out, to regulate prices on an equitable basis, equitable to producer and consumer alike. They would not do it, and therefore food control is adopted. The nation must have bread.

That is the significance of Mr. Hoover.